

AREAWIDE LAND MANAGEMENT POLICIES (Chapter Three of original plan)

MANAGEMENT INTENT STATEMENT FOR THE HATCHER PASS MANAGEMENT UNIT

The goals of the Hatcher Pass Management Plan are to manage the area for use and enjoyment of the area's resources, conservation of its scenic and environmental quality, to improve public safety, to retain the management unit in public ownership, and to provide opportunities for economic development which are consistent with the major uses.

The major designated uses are public recreation, including tourism and opportunities for the recreation industry, mining, fish and wildlife habitat, and grazing. The plan outlines where and under what conditions these will occur. The area has been divided into nine subunits (see Map 11) which reflect differing resource values and management concerns. The intent is for all of these uses to occur within the Hatcher Pass Management Unit. However, not all uses will occur in each of the nine subunits. For example, mining is more important in some locations and recreation is more important in others. Grazing and forestry are site specific, based on occurrence of the resource. Wildlife values are higher in the western and southern portions of the unit.

A variety of management approaches will be used emphasizing different resources in different subunits. Exploration for and development of mineral resources will be encouraged throughout most of the area but will be emphasized in those portions of the unit with highest mineral potential. Dispersed recreation will be encouraged throughout the unit, but intensive recreational development will be limited largely to two nodes in Independence Valley and the [NORTH]eastern and southern portions of Government Peak. In order to provide a balance of recreational uses, some areas will be designated as non-motorized. Individual trails will be constructed and designated for different types of recreational use, funds permitting. The road corridor, which receives heavy recreational use, should be managed to increase public safety and to improve the opportunities for scenic viewing. In the Willow Mountain subunit, which has exceptionally high wildlife productivity, all other uses must consider impacts on the wildlife resource. Hunting will continue to occur within the entire unit (with the possible exception of portions of the Government Peak Subunit), but in the upper Little Susitna valley ptarmigan hunting will be by foot, snowshoe, or ski access. Information on wildlife viewing opportunities will be provided and a diversity of habitat maintained. Utilization of the grassland resources by domestic livestock may occur when it is consistent with range conservation practices and the maintenance of wildlife productivity. Sustained yield forestry harvest will occur in the eastern portion of the Hillside subunit on mental health lands, while in other areas forest harvest will occur only for habitat enhancement or disease control. Thus, as use increases over the coming years, provisions will be made for the continuance of a wide variety of uses.

Due to the intensity of demands on the area's resources, both current and projected, this plan outlines the basic management strategy which will be required in the future to prevent degradation of the resources and the quality of the recreational experience. The plan includes guidelines for how various uses will occur that will create conditions for continued compatibility among those uses.

The Hatcher Pass area provides for many unique opportunities: the potential for the creation of a major tourism destination point within an active mining district and for the discovery of new minerals is high; it can supply rangeland supplements for the Matanuska-Susitna dairy and livestock industry; and it offers a variety of near-to-urban-centers recreational opportunities, both developed and non-developed. With careful management, these resource uses can occur while maintaining the important wildlife habitat and scenic values of the area.